

# LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

*Teacher Tips by Brent Amato*

SAY YOU ARE pondering the best way to teach a lesson on the resurrection. As always, you have options. You can lecture, pose discussion questions, do small-group exercises—or you could try something drastically different.

What if your classroom became a theater in which you present a one-act play with the script drawn from Luke 24:1-12, some of your students as the actors, the rest as the audience, and you as the director? Imagine a darkened room called *Disciples' Hideout* where several dejected men are exchanging mournful “if only” remarks when some women burst in excitedly with news that is just too outlandish to believe.

*Lights, camera, action!* Let's see how such an approach teaches and what it involves.

## **Drama Engages**

How do you know whether or not your students are connecting with your teaching? Acting puts minds and bodies in motion, resulting in an “ownership” of the lesson by your students that other teaching methods can't deliver. “But,” you say, “you don't know my students! They would never do this, and even if they went along with it, they don't have a creative bone in their bodies!”

I beg to differ on both counts. Everyone has a little drama in them; it's just that most people don't have a stage. As for audience members, they will be on the edge of their seats, or at least awake and attentive.

## **Drama Enhances**

Four learning styles will be found in your classroom. *Dynamic Learners* are spontaneous and action-oriented; *Innovative Learners* are imaginative and willing to volunteer; *Common-Sense Learners* are experimental and practical; and *Analytic Learners* are systematic and lovers of facts. With variety in your teaching methods, you'll reach all four. Those who are *dynamic* and *innovative* will enjoy the creativity of drama; you'll be amazed at what such students will add to your play! Don't sweat those in the *common sense* and *analytic* camps; with variety in your teaching method, their day will come.

Beyond sensitivity to learning styles is the issue of retention. Educational consultants state that we retain 10 percent of what we hear; 50 percent of what we hear and see; 70 percent of what we hear, see, and say; and 90 percent of what we hear, see, say, and do. Since drama falls in the last category, its usefulness as a teaching method should not be overlooked!

## **Drama Entertains**

I am convinced that effective learning in a Sunday school setting needs a healthy dose of enjoyment. Excitement and emotion fill a theater during a good production. Laughter, which is inevitable during drama, enhances every lesson. Both the audience and the actors come away with a memorable lesson that kept their interest and gave them something to consider.

## **Preparation**

The type of drama we're talking about here is not burdensome in terms of preparation, either for you or your actors. For the *Disciples' Hideout* drama, described above, the written scripts that you will distribute should do no more than excerpt the applicable Scripture for the characters involved. Your creative learners can take it from there!

Give your actors a week or two to think over their parts. The day of the performance, give the actors some time to review their scripts and compare notes. Then “raise the curtain” and enjoy a well-taught class!